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CPW Report No. 23 -- USSR

(Feb. 16-24, 1952)

SUMMARY

Army Day (Feb. 23) is accorded the usual wide publicity on the central and regional transmitters. Writing on the occasion, Dossaf chief Kuznetsov urges the further expansion of that paramilitary organization, particularly in the rural areas. The major part of the output on agriculture is devoted to instances of agricultural statute violations (narushenie selkhozustava) and the vexing personnel problem, although mechanical deficiencies still claim considerable attention. Inadequate political propaganda, particularly for the intelligentsia, and Party red tape in general still account for most of the output on Party activities. The failure of the Komsomol organizations to increase their membership is the object of official criticism.

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USSR

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Agriculture: Most of the broadcasts on agriculture intercepted during the week of Feb. 16-24 continue to stress the familiar failings which are becoming more threatening with the approach of the spring sowing campaign. The major emphasis in the central and regional comment on the topic, however, is on the adverse effects of kolkhoz charter violations, technical unpreparedness, and the grave shortage of qualified personnel from collective farm chairmen to truck drivers.

In a criticism of the continuing widespread practice of squandering public lands, pilfering collective farm property and produce, and unscrupulous manipulation of payroll figures, FRAVDA (Feb. 16) calls for the restoration of order (navesti poryadok) in agriculture and the elimination of grafters and spongers (rvachi i darmoyedy). No reference is made in the editorial to specific places but the extent of the mentioned malpractice is indicated in the statement that collective farm charter violations are still prevalent "in a number of oblasts, kraia, and republics" (v ryade oblastey, krayev, i respublik). This situation is further aggravated by the apparent reluctance of the unnamed culprits to return the stolen farm land and other property since not all of it has as yet been recovered: "A considerable part of the stolen land, cattle, and property has not been returned to the kolkhozes" (kolkhozam vozvrashcheno znachitelnoye kolichestvo rashishchennoy u nikh zemli, skota i imushchestva). Unfortunately, the paper continues, land squandering is still going on as is "the buying up of collective farm products for a song" (pokupka kolkhoznoy produktsii za bestsenok). These illegal manipulations are said to be made possible by the "conciliatory attitude" (primirencheskoye otnoshenie) of certain Party and Soviet officials toward both the violators of the kolkhoz charter and "their patrons" (ikh pokroviteli). The papers urge the return of the collective farm properties still held illegally by the "charter violators" (narushiteli ustava) in the shortest possible time, and their punishment as enemies of the collective farm system (vragi kolkhoznogo stroya). Order must also be restored in the matter of timekeeping, which does not always reflect the correct distribution of workdays among the farmers, as well as in the utilization of public funds as specified in the charter.

ZVEZDA (Feb. 17) admits that the collective farm statute "is still being violated" throughout the Republic, despite the timely warning against the practice by the Central Committee of the Byelorussian Communist Party. "Cases of squandering of collective farm property still occur both with regard to land and livestock as well as to produce and financial funds." This is particularly frequent in the "young" collective farms of the western oblasts which are presumably less efficient and experienced than their older counterparts elsewhere. The editorial is also stern about the covert methods employed by some farms to by-pass the charter:

The statute is often infringed upon in a camouflaged way, as for example by making the land available to various enterprises and institutions in exchange for services rendered.

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Of some interest in this connection is the editorial reference to the Republic's "organs of justice and public prosecution" which, in the paper's view, "are also responsible" for the infringements of the statute. Their insufficient attention to cases of property squandering and the failure to prosecute the guilty serve as a tacit encouragement to further violations.

Collective farm property squandering and incorrect computation (nepravilnoye ischislenie) of labor days on the farms also provide the substance for a SOVETSKAYA SIBIR editorial of Feb. 19. Lack of proper control is held responsible for the squandering of collective farm property including livestock, fodder, and milk. The paper enjoins the collective farm bookkeepers to exercise stricter control over property disposition and payrolls, both of which are admittedly out of control in the following rayons: Cherepanovskiy, Legostayevskiy, Irmenskiy, Ordynskiy, Kuibyshevskiy, and Kyshtovskiy. The hint that dishonest bookkeeping on the farms may be a factor in contributing to losses is contained in the editorial appeal to the appropriate Party and Soviet organizations to help the kolkhozes "select and train ... conscientious accountants."

"Anti-state and anti-Party" activities in the form of squandering, pilfering and payroll manipulations are still in evidence in Smolensk Oblast, according to RABOCHIY PUT (Feb. 20). Much work has already been done toward the elimination of "serious" statute violations in the oblast but it appears that they "have not yet been fully liquidated." The paper refers to the "great harm" already inflicted on the oblast agriculture by infrequent and inadequate auditing, and urges the immediate liquidation of "all sorts of statute violations" by the institution of the spot check method of control (proverka na mestakh).

Criticism of the general ineptitude characterizing the maintenance, repair, and utilization of farm machinery still claims a considerable part of the comment on agriculture. Most of the transmitters stress that the number of tractor repairs never catches up with the number of breakdowns. Frequent reference is made also to the poor quality of repair work which, as one paper points out, is to a large extent responsible for the breakdowns. STALINSKOYE ZNAMYA (Feb. 16) complains that the majority of the oblast machine-tractor stations are more than 30% behind the repair plan, while some of them are "still worse off." This situation, the paper admits, is not new since many of the machine-tractor stations have failed to honor their pledges and collective agreements "from year to year." Only a "shocking lack of sense of responsibility", the editorial asserts, can produce such a state of affairs, and only self-sacrificing work, strengthened labor discipline, and the discarding of the "handicraft methods" (kustarnye sposoby) of work will remedy the situation. Taking up the subject on Feb. 17, the paper declares that further delays in the preparations for spring sowing will not be tolerated and that the Party and agricultural officials had better take a closer look at the shortcomings since the slow agricultural rayons are "not taking energetic measures" to eliminate them. Korablinskiy, Troekurovskiy, Iartolstovskiy, and other rayons are listed as the most critical areas.

While censuring the unsatisfactory performance of the oblast tractor-repair shops, STALINGRADSKAYA PRAVDA (Feb. 19) is not unmindful of other factors which, in its opinion, act as a brake on technical progress. The "leveling of wages" (uravnilovka), for one, is said to have a deleterious effect on the better mechanics and tractor operators. This practice should be "liquidated" at once and replaced by Socialist competition. The quality of repairs in the oblast as a whole is low enough to "cause serious alarm", and no quantitative indices can possibly cover that deficiency. A reconditioned tractor, the paper says, should be able to do more than merely roll out of the repair shop on its own power. But this is just what the chief engineers and station heads consider a job well done. Twelve rayons are listed as being far behind their repair schedules and at least seven others, according to the editorial of Feb. 22, are doing "particularly bad repair work." They are: Khopetskiy, Mikhailovskiy, Macheschanskiy, Medveditskiy, Molotovskiy, Olkhovskiy, Staro-Poltavskiy, and other rayons. Various technical hitches slowing the preparations for the spring sowing are reported also from Sumy (Feb. 19), Odessa (Feb. 21), Saratov (Feb. 23), and Pakov (Feb. 24).

PRAVDA (Feb. 18) finds that, despite the officially encouraged trend toward filling responsible agricultural posts with agronomists and other specialists, the latter are still kept out of executive positions in a number of oblasts, krais, and republics. In Kirov Oblast, for example, only some 100 out of the available 5,000 agricultural experts were able to obtain positions as collective farm chairmen. Similar discrimination against specialists, according to the paper,

is observable in Kostroma and Kaluga Oblasts as well as in Altai Krai. STALINGRADSKAYA PRAVDA (Feb. 21) discusses the farm-chairman problem along similar lines. The paper also contends that the need for highly qualified kolkhoz chairman is all the more imperative now that most of the collective farms have been consolidated into larger agricultural units where technical knowledge is a sine qua non. Some of the rayon Party Committees, it is claimed, look upon the periodical report of the kolkhoz chairman which is followed by Party advice as an end in itself without realizing that a well-qualified and well-educated chairman could cope with his own problems and would need less advice.

Party Activities: The activities of the Karelo-Finnish Communist Party, according to a PRAVDA article by Petrovsky (Feb. 16, not broadcast), are characterized by substantial shortcomings (suschestvennie nedostatki). The confusion in the Central Committee itself is said to be so great that it is not unusual for it to take "several different decisions on the same question" (neskolko resheniy po odnomu i tomu zhe voprosu). This was particularly obvious in the case of the Central Committee's four decisions "on the elimination of Komsomol shortcomings" taken at four different sessions. The fifth session which was called for the same purpose finally adopted a proposal to make no more decisions on Komsomol activities but to try to implement the ones already made. And so, Petrovsky concludes, it took about 2 months to draw such a simple conclusion (itak, potrebovalos okolo dvukh mesiatsev, chtoby priti k takomu prostomu vyvodu).

Much disparaging comment is heard on the regional transmitters on the tendency among Party propagandists to pay "too much attention to the quantity of lectures at the expense of their quality." The Party Committees of Dukhovshchinsky and Yelnitsky rayons and Smolensk and Roslavl towns have been pretty consistent in that malpractice, according to RABOCHIY FUT (Feb. 17). ORLOVSKAYA PRAVDA (Feb. 17) warns against a similar trend in Orel Oblast where lecture propaganda is "still backward." An incidental admission that the quantity of lectures to be delivered is still a factor to be borne in mind is contained in an editorial reference to certain lecture groups which are "still failing to fulfill their plans," that is, the quantitative end of the propaganda plan.

As for the political and ideological level of most of the lectures, the paper points out that it is indeed so low that in at least one rayon--Mtsensk--lectures for the intelligentsia had to be "completely discontinued." The situation is said to be still worse in Zadonsky Rayon where only 9 out of the available 25 lecturers are sufficiently qualified for their work. There is virtually "no control" over lecture propaganda in Krasnozorenskiy, Volynskiy, and Uritskiy rayons, and the dissemination of political and scientific knowledge "is badly organized" in Khabenskii, Novosilskiy, and Pokrovskiy Rayons.

PSKOVSKAYA PRAVDA and ORLOVSKAYA PRAVDA (Feb. 17) are critical of the Party propagandists who prefer to "stray off into theoretical abstractions" instead of using the Marxist-Leninist theory to "explain contemporary problems." The results of this year's studies in the Party school network, says PSKOVSKAYA PRAVDA, show that many of the students are going about their work "in a superficial manner," and memorizing "unconnected facts and figures" and in some cases are still employing the "long condemned" methods of questions and answers. Such scholastic methods, the paper asserts, will never "find the link" between historical materialism and our times which is the main object of political education:

...the mastery of Marxist-Leninist theory means understanding the essence of this theory -- the knowledge of how to use it in solving practical questions ... under various conditions of the proletariat's class struggle.

The fits-and-starts methods employed in political propaganda are criticized in a summarized version of a VELIKOLUKSKAYA PRAVDA editorial (Feb. 20) which remarks that major events are usually preceded by animation (ozhivlenie) and followed by a lull (zatishye). The Party must always remember, the paper declares, that political agitation, intraparty or among the masses, is not an occasional affair but a serious aspect of their work which is not to be neglected.

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A summarized article by Tsyrlenko broadcast from Bobruisk on Feb. 16 reveals that some Komsomol organizations, under Party pressure to expand their membership, resort to figure-juggling to show favorable results. The Michurin rural Komsomol organization, for instance, listed its membership in a report to the rayon Committee at "over 50", whereas a checkup established the actual number of organization members to be 29. Tsyrlenko also discloses that 52% of the industrial and 30% of the rural Komsomol organizations in the oblas "did not admit a single new member" into their ranks in the second half of 1951.

PRIZYV (Feb. 20) is sharply critical of the Vladimir Oblast Communists for keeping aloof from the intelligentsia, such as teachers, doctors, agronomists and others, and refusing to make use of them in mass agitation work. This attitude, the paper implies, is a hangover of the past and shows "lack of appreciation" of the rural intelligentsia as a great force capable of helping the Party "to mold the Communist awareness of the workers." There is no indication as to whether the intelligentsia under discussion is understood to consist of Party members since this does not always affect the decision of the Party Committees. As indicated in previous broadcasts, and implied in the PRIZYV editorial, the tendency of various Party Committees to reserve the job of Party-political agitation to their own "professionals" (apparatchiki) explains their reluctance to broaden the agitation activities by the inclusion of "outsiders."

As a republican publication on theoretical and political questions, the monthly magazine BOLSHEVIK BELORUSSII is not up to its noble calling and must "seriously improve" (seryozno uluchshit) its work, according to Lukovets in PRAVDA (Feb. 24, not broadcast). The author takes issue with some of the articles recently published in the periodical which do not reflect the historical truth, that is, "the leading and directing role of the Party" (rukovodyashchaya i napravlyayushchaya rol partii) in all the people's activities from the wartime guerrilla warfare to the present construction of Communism. Apyakin's article on the gradual elimination of "all the vices peculiar to a capitalist society" (vse poroki svoystvennye kapitalisticheskamu obshchestvy), for example, does not place due emphasis on the gigantic job done in this connection by the Communist Party.

Other articles appearing in the journal do not assign the Party a leading part in the partisan warfare in Byelorussia and behind the enemy's front line. The failure to comment on Gutorov's book, "The Esthetic Foundations of Soviet Literature," which is full of great errors and shortcomings, is held to "lower the level" (snizhayet uroven) of the magazine. "Planlessness and fortuity" (besplanovost i sluchainost), Lukovets concludes, are the general characteristics of BOLSHEVIK BELORUSSII, which often resembles a departmental gazette (vedomstvenny vestnik) rather than a theoretical and political organ.

Miscellaneous: A report from Vilnius, Lithuania (Feb. 19), tells of a collection of articles and other documentary evidence on American counterrevolutionary activities in that country recently published in book form. Among the documents quoted in the book is one "proving" that the United States demanded 7½ million dollars in return for its contribution to the suppression of the Soviet regime in Lithuania in 1918-1919.

Moscow in English to the United Kingdom (Feb. 15) says that credit for the exact determination of the earth's shape and dimensions should go to Soviet scientist Izotov who proved the previous findings on the subject -- by Bessel and Hayford -- inadequate. The earth's radius at the equator, Izotov finds, is 850 meters greater than indicated by Bessel and 140 meters smaller than Hayford's figure. Soviet geodetical work is said to have confirmed this.

An item from Tallin (in Estonian, Feb. 20) lists the names of the officials and workers of the "Rovu" State farm in connection with their general activities. All those mentioned appear to have Russian-sounding names.

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